United Nations A/C.5/55/17

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 October 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session
**Fifth Committee**
Agenda item 118
**Programme planning**

## Letter dated 23 October 2000 from the Chairman of the First Committee addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

In response to your letter dated 19 September 2000 concerning the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, it is my pleasure to inform you that at its 16th meeting, on 17 October 2000, the First Committee considered programme 2, Disarmament, of the proposed medium-term plan (A/55/6 (Prog. 2)) and the revisions thereto (A/55/16, part one).

Attached please find an extract from the verbatim record (A/C.1/55/PV.16) of the thematic discussion on item subjects, including the consideration and recommendations on programme 2 of the medium-term plan, to allow the Fifth Committee to take into account the views of Member States on this issue.

I should like to take this opportunity to wish you and your Committee success in your work.

(*Signed*) Mya **Than**
Chairman, First Committee

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## Annex

### Extract from the verbatim record of the 16th meeting of the First Committee (A/C.1/55/PV.16)

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the medium-term plan on the basis of the documents that were distributed last Friday: A/55/6, programme 2; A/55/16, part I; and A/C.1/55/CRP.3.

I give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, to make some introductory remarks on the medium-term plan.

**Mr. Dhanapala** (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): The disarmament programme of the Organization, programme 2, is one of the eight priority programmes identified by the Secretary-General, and its implementation has been vested with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, which was re-established in 1998.

Before I proceed to introduce the proposed medium-term plan contained in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3, which is now before the Committee, I should like to provide some background information on this proposed plan.

Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly that medium-term-plan proposals be reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies prior to their submission to the United Nations programme and budgetary bodies, the draft medium-term plan for disarmament was submitted last April to the Disarmament Commission for review. Thereafter, a revised proposed plan that took into account the comments of the Disarmament Commission was submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination by the Secretary-General at its fortieth session, held from 5 June to 1 July 2000, for its consideration.

The Secretary-General's proposed medium-term plan for disarmament is contained in document A/55/6, programme 2. On the basis of the outcome of its discussions, the Committee for Programme and Coordination introduced a number of modifications to the proposed medium-term plan for the disarmament programme and recommended that the General Assembly approve the proposed plan, as modified.

The modified medium-term plan is contained in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3, as I mentioned earlier, while the results of the discussion at the Committee for Programme and Coordination, including its conclusions and recommendations, are recorded in document A/55/16, part I. I understand that the three documents I have mentioned were circulated to the First Committee last Friday.

As representatives know, the medium-term plan is the principal policy directive of the United Nations. It is a translation of legislative mandates into programmes and subprogrammes, its objectives and strategies to be derived from the policy orientations and goals set by the intergovernmental organs. It serves as a framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budgets within the period covered by the plan. It should be noted also that the medium-term plan will be revised and updated every two years to reflect any new or additional mandates derived from the General Assembly and relevant intergovernmental organs.

The proposed plan for the disarmament programme was drawn up on the basis of existing mandates set by the Charter and the General Assembly in the field of arms limitation and disarmament, including its special sessions on disarmament. As such, the proposed plan does not deviate in any significant manner from the previous medium-term plan for disarmament, given that there has been no drastic change in the existing mandates.

I should like to bring to the Committee's attention, however, one main difference between the last medium-term plan and the one that is now before the Committee. The current proposed plan contains a description of the disarmament programme as a whole as well as of its subprogrammes, which correspond to the organizational units of the Department. There were no subprogrammes in the previous plan.

Let me now briefly highlight the proposed plan of the disarmament programme. The general orientation of the programme continues to focus on two major concerns in the field of disarmament, namely weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and conventional arms. As outlined in the proposed plan before the Committee, contained in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3, the overall strategy of the programme

is to facilitate and to encourage, as appropriate, disarmament measures at all levels.

Within this framework, the programme will continue to assist Member States in promoting, strengthening and consolidating multilaterally negotiated principles and norms in all the fields of disarmament. It will promote transparency and confidence-building measures. It will expand its outreach activities, including through its Web site on the Internet, to ensure the exchange of impartial and factual information on disarmament and security-related matters among Member States, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. It will assist Member States in promoting regional approaches to disarmament and security, including through the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

The programme will continue to facilitate the process of multilateral deliberation and negotiation. It will monitor and assess current and future trends in the field of disarmament and international security. It will continue to provide training and advisory services to Member States, in particular developing countries. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/2, the programme will address gender concerns in its activities.

The objectives of the disarmament programme will be pursued through its five sub-programmes, namely, multilateral negotiations on arms limitation and disarmament; weapons of mass destruction; conventional arms, including practical disarmament measures; monitoring database and information; and regional disarmament.

Bearing in mind that the medium-term plan provides the future direction and approach of the disarmament programme, I need not stress how important and valuable the input of this Committee will be as the main Committee of the General Assembly dealing with disarmament and international security matters. I look forward to the constructive views and comments of the members of the Committee. I remain at the Committee's disposal for any additional information or clarifications. As pointed out by the Chairman, the views of members on the deliberations of the proposed plan will be transmitted to the Fifth Committee, which is expected to begin its consideration of the item on programme planning at the end of October.

**The Chairman:** The floor is now open for comments. In this connection, I should like to inform the Committee that the Under-Secretary-General has expressed his readiness to answer any questions concerning the medium-term plan.

**Ms. Arce de Jeannet** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his detailed introduction of the disarmament section of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

The delegation of Mexico had the honour of coordinating the informal consultations held on programme 2, entitled "Disarmament", of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 during the meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination session held last July.

I should like to express our appreciation to all the delegations that took part in those consultations. Their flexibility and readiness to compromise made it possible for us to reach agreement on a text acceptable to all the participants. The recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which are contained in paragraph 55 of Part I of document A/55/16, reflect that consensus. I should point out that that text is the same as that circulated in the First Committee in document A/C.1/55/CRP.3.

These were negotiations which, above all, highlighted the interest Member States have in consolidating the work of the Organization in the disarmament arena. In the course of the consultations, compromises necessary for reaching agreement had to be made. The final text represents a delicate balance which we believe must be preserved. Perhaps because of a mistake in the transcription of the document agreed to in informal consultations, the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination did not included the agreed version of the final paragraph dealing with the legislative mandates for programme 2, entitled "Disarmament". That, too, was a consensus paragraph. It should read as follows:

(*spoke in English*)

> "The mandate for the programme derives from the priorities established in the relevant General Assembly resolutions and decisions in the field of disarmament, including the final document of the tenth special session of the

General Assembly devoted to disarmament, resolution S-10/2."

*(spoke in Spanish)*

That paragraph should take the place of the list of resolutions currently found in A/C.1/55/CRP.3, because that was the text agreed on in the informal consultations.

Having made that clarification, the delegation of Mexico reaffirms its backing for the recommendations submitted by the Committee for Programme and Coordination for programme 2, entitled "Disarmament", with the aim of ensuring their inclusion in the final version of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

**The Chairman:** The comments of the representative of Mexico will, of course, be transmitted to the Fifth Committee.

If any other delegation wishes to speak, the floor is open.

Delegations may also submit their views to me in writing. Those views will also be transmitted to the Fifth Committee. Delegations wishing to submit their views in writing should do so by 23 October at the latest, so that we have time to prepare the report to the Fifth Committee.

As no other delegation wishes to speak on this subject, I should like to express, on behalf of the Committee, our deep appreciation for the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his very comprehensive statement relating to the medium-term plan.

We have concluded our consideration of the medium-term plan. We shall prepare a verbatim record of the discussion in the Committee this morning, reflecting the views and comments expressed by delegations, and will transmit it to the Fifth Committee for due consideration.